THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

MARX'S THEORY OF HUMAN NATURE: A DEFENSE

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©

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL 1981

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

RELEASE FORM

NAME OF AUTHOR: HERMES BENITEZ

TITLE OF THESIS: MARX'S THEORY OF HUMAN NATURE: A DEFENSE

DEGREE FOR WHICH THESIS WAS PRESENTED: MASTER OF ARTS

YEAR THIS DEGREE GRANTED: 1981

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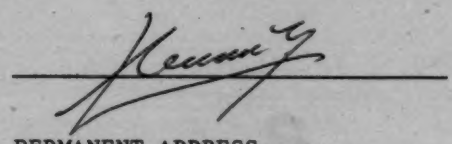

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express here my sincere appreciation to a number of people who had greatly contributed to make this thesis possible. Firstly to all the members of my Thesis Committee who in one way or another shaped my ideas and writing. Professor Wes Cooper by his sympathetic, skillful and diligent supervision; Professor Bruce Hunter who also read and criticized this thesis; Professor Schouls whose 1980 course on Hegel's Phenomenology furnished the basis for my understanding of Hegelian Philosophy, and Professor Margaret Van De Pitte who helped me greatly with her intelligent criticisms.

I also wish to express my debt to Liane Brink by putting so much sympathy, patience and goodwill into the painstaking job of typing this thesis.

Last but not least I wish to thank publicly here Professor John King-Farlow whose fraternity and constant support has been crucial in the obtaining of my M.A. degree in what were, for me, difficult conditions of exile.

ABSTRACT

This thesis is dedicated to the critical examination of a central objection to Marx's theory of alienation: an objection which affects indirectly his theory of Man as a whole. The objection consists in the accusation that in order to expose man's social alienation and to strive for its transcendence, Marx necessarily requires a utopian or ahistorical concept of man, as the standard by which the present condition of man is to be judged. Thus, according to this interpretation, when Marx describes the present state of man as "alienated" he is in fact saying that man has been deprived of his "true essence"; but in so far as Marx rejects at the same time the notion of a constant nature of man he cannot consistently claim to know in advance what this "true essence" of man can be in the future.

This thesis responds to the criticism sketched above, showing that the whole objection is based on a complete misunderstanding of the meaning of Marx's concept of alienation, and of the theory of its historical transcendence. As this thesis shows these two misconceptions are based, in turn, on the critics' lack of perception of two narrowly related conceptions: (1) The doctrine, expressed in The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, according to which labour is the "key" to the knowledge of man's essence; (2) The doctrine of the dialectical unity of man's actual and possible nature, or which is the same, the marxian theory of man's essence.

TO

ALEJANDRA

"Die Wurzel für den Menschen
ist aber der Mensch selbst"

K. Marx

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INTRODUCTION

The central concern of this thesis is the crucial examination of a crucial objection to Marx's theory of man, an objection which guides the prevalent interpretation of his doctrine of alienation. The objection can be summarized as follows:

> Marx's concept of man is untenable because his theory of alienation is in itself unacceptable, in so far as it is based on a utopian or ahistorical conception of man's essence. This conception serves Marx as the standard by means of which the present condition of man is judged, but it is a purely normative device which allows him to describe the existent state of man as "alienated", i.e., as a state in which man is deprived of his "true" essence. But what Marx seems not to realize is that to talk in these terms one must know in advance this "true" essence of man. But Marx cannot consistently claim such knowledge because he rejects the existence of a constant nature of man, which is equivalent to ruling out the possibility of determining ahistorically what will be man's essence in the future.

In general terms, my answer to this criticism consists in the attempt to show how the whole objection is based on a complete misconception of the meaning of both Marx's notion of alienation, and the dialectical relationship between this central concept and the marxian program of historical transcendence of alienation. The critics have interpreted wrongly Marx's doctrine of human nature by not paying enough attention to the meaning of the concept of labour as the "key" to the knowledge of man; and for that reason they have lost sight of what constitutes the empirical foundation of the concept of alienation: The unity of man's actual and possible nature.

The first chapter of this thesis is dedicated to the examination of Marx's position with respect to the utopian condemnation of capitalist

society in what constitutes one of the first attempts in accounting for the problems of the evolution of Marx's thought: Rubin's Essays on Marx's Theory of Values, a work that prefigured in the thirties Althusser's controversial interpretation of the meaning of Marx's early work.

The second chapter deals with the question of alienation and objectification in Marx and Hegel, aiming to show the doctrinary continuity of Marx's thought concerning these two concepts and its importance for an adequate understanding of his theory of human nature.

But the importance of the two first chapters stems principally from the fact that both are meant to furnish the conceptual elements and the theoretical context necessary for the elucidation of the central problem of this thesis in Chapters Three and Four.

Two concepts are crucial for the understanding of this thesis: the concepts of alienation and objectification, which are introduced in the first chapters. I will attempt a preliminary definition of each one of these concepts whose meaning, I hope, will appear fully manifest with the unfolding of this thesis. Introduced in Chapter One, the concept of alienation refers to the historical phenomenon (i.e., not ontological) of enslavement and domination of man by the forces that he himself sets in motion in the process of his self-realization. For Marx the origins of alienation and its permanent basis in society stem from the expropriation of labour force, which characterizes all systems of property from slavery to capitalism. This expropriation of labour separates the direct producer from the instruments and products of his work. As I shall show, alienation is for Marx the result of specific forms of social and economic organization, and not the natural or necessary result of the unfolding of man's productive activity.

The concept of alienation can be adequately grasped only if it is understood as a contradictory form of objectification, as an estranged objectification. By objectification Marx meant the process by means of which man expresses himself in and through the material of his activity, transforming himself in his labour of adapting external nature to human requirements. The objects of labour become thus the objective manifes-

tation of human productive powers, crystalizations of human energies and goals. The process of objectification is for Marx always a social process in so far as man cannot but unfold his productive activity in the frame of a determinate social organization. Not only society is for Marx the product of man's creative powers, but also external nature and the material world are, in their present state, the objectification of man's productive potencies. What happens in alienation is that the process of objectification is reverted into a process in which man looses himself in the object of his productive activity. Instead of being man the subject he becomes the object of material powers that should serve him. The worker becomes thus a mere means for the realization of an objective process which transcend him and enslaves him.

I have made an extensive use of quotations from Marx's early and mature works throughout the entire thesis. I believe this justified given the critical and interpretative nature of this enquiry, but also because one of the collateral aims of this thesis is to show the continuity of Marx's doctrines with regard to human nature and alienation in his different periods.

Finally, it goes without saying that my interest in giving to this thesis the character of a defense is not the expression of any dogmatic naivete, (aiming to demonstrate Marx's infallibility or something of that sort), but rather the fruit of a genuine philosophical dissatisfaction with the prevalent interpretations of his work.

CHAPTER ONE

MARX AND THE UTOPIAN CONDEMNATION OF CAPITALISM

> Communism is for us not a state of affairs which is to be established, an ideal to which reality has to adjust itself. We call communism the real movement which abolishes the present state of things.
> --K. Marx, The German Ideology

The publication in 1932 of Marx's Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844 seems to have made marxist theoreticians realize the existence of a problem in Marx's work, a problem that can be detected in the interpretation of the thought of any great thinker, which could be presented in the following terms: Was Marx always "marxist"? If he was not, in what moment of his intellectual life can we establish the point at which marxism appeared as a distinguishable doctrine? In turn these questions lead to others: What is the relationship of Marx's early works with those classically considered as doctrinally definitive, such a A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy and Capital? Is this relationship one of continuity or one of rupture? With respect to these questions different positions were adopted in what became in the sixties an actual philosophical controversy. But in fact these problems of interpretation of Marx's thought were already discussed, though on a minor scale, in the theoretical debates on marxism in the twenties and thirties. One of the first marxist theoreticians who fully appreciated the problem of the apparent discontinuity between the young and the mature Marx's doctrines, was the Soviet economist Isaak Illich Rubin.[1] In his rarely quoted work Essays on Marx's Theory of Value[2] Rubin introduces

the question of the discontinuity of Marx's thought in the attempt to solve the problem of the origin and development of his theory of fetishism. For our present purpose the importance of Rubin's interpretative attempt is that it places the theory of human nature in the center of what will constitute later the problem of alienation. The Soviet economist claims that in the young Marx's writings known by that time, particularly in The Holy Family (published in 1845), and under strong influence of utopian-socialist ideas (specially Proudhon's), we can find what he calls the "embryo" of Marx's theory of commodity fetishism:

> ...in the form of a contrast between "social", or "human" relations, and their "alienated", materialized form. The source of this contrast was the widespread conception of Utopian Socialists on the character of the capitalist system. According to the Utopian Socialists, this system is characterized by the fact that the worker is forced to "self-alienate" his personality, and that he "alienates" the product of his labour from himself. The domination of "things" of capital over man, over the worker, is expressed through this alienation.[3]

For Rubin the utopian socialist indictment of capitalist society is based on the contrast between utopia and reality, i.e., between the ideal of man and its (then) present practical reality. From this perspective the power of capital which dominates in economic life is in conflict with the human element, in the sense that the former is opposed to a certain ideal or norm of what man should be. Or as Rubin puts it: "Human relations and their 'alienated' form are two worlds, the world of what should be and the world of what is." For him this is simply equivalent to "...a condemnation of capitalist reality in the name of a socialist ideal."[4]

Thus, concludes Rubin

> In order to transform this theory of "alienation" of human relations into a theory of "reification" of social relations (i.e., into the theory of commodity fetishism) Marx had to create a path from Utopian to Scientific socialism, from praises of Proudhon to a sharp critique of his ideas, from negating reality in the name of an ideal to seeking within reality itself the forces for further development and motion.[5]

In other words the Soviet economist conceives the supposed movement from

the theory of alienation to the theory of fetishism in Marx thought, not as a dialectical transition but as a pure rupture with his "original" utopian position. According to Rubin this process of rupture occurs as a result of the establishment by Marx of a new opposition instead of the utopian one which contrast "human relations" with their "alienated form", thus:

> If the opposition which [Marx] had earlier described between human relations and their "material" form meant an opposition between what should be and what is, now both opposing factors are transferred to the world as it is, to social being.... Production relations among people and their "material" form is the content of a new opposition, which originated in the earlier opposition between the "human" element in the economy and its "alienated" forms. The formula of commodity fetishism was found in this way. But several stages were still necessary before Marx gave this theory its final formulation.[6]

Rubin does not say what this new opposition is but he seems to be alluding here to what Marx will call later the contradiction between productive forces and relations of production. As a consequence of this theoretical shift, Rubin claims, Marx abandoned the study of man's essence in favour of the study of man's objective historical existence, and in doing so Marx also would have abandoned the use of the term "alienation" because the earlier use of the word had made it merely an abbreviated expression of "man's alienation from his essence".[7] This is, in a condensed form, Rubin's interpretation of Marx's intellectual evolution between 1845 and 1857. It is interesting to notice that this interpretation contains some of the basic elements which will constitute in time a true school of marxist thought, presenting for instance a striking similarity with Althusser's reading of Marx's intellectual development presented in Pour Marx more than thirty-five years later.[8]

From a critical perspective Rubin's interpretation appears based on two insufficiently proven assumptions. Firstly, Rubin has not satisfactorily proved that Marx actually shared the so called "utopian" conception from which the factual-ideal opposition stems. In other words, he has not shown that the earlier Marx would have thought of the whole question of man's alienation in a utopian framework, thus accepting the utop-

ian and abstract belief that the conflict between existence and essence of man can be understood by means of the study of his essence in abstraction from man's real historical existence. Secondly, Rubin has not proved that the theory of alienation necessarily requires, as its implicit presupposition, the ideal-actual dichotomy. (This point will be considered in a somewhat different form in Chapter Three.)

How does Rubin try to prove point one? He makes the attempt by means of a very debatable interpretation of some passages of The Holy Family in which Marx evaluates Proudhon's contribution to the criticism of capitalist society. A relevant passage from Marx's text is as follows:

> Sometimes political economists stress the significance of the human element, though only one aspect of this element, in economical relations, but they do this in exceptional cases, namely, when they attack a particular abuse; sometimes (in the majority of the cases) they take these relations as they are given, with their strict economic sense. All the conclusions of political economy presuppose private property. This basic assumption is, in their eyes, an incontestable fact which is not susceptible to further investigation....However Proudhon exposes the basis of political economy, namely, private property, to critical examination....By making working time (which is the direct essence of human activity as such) the measure of wages and the value of the product, Proudhon makes the human element decisive. However in old political economy the decisive factor was the material power of capital and landed property.[9]

On Rubin's interpretation Marx would be accepting here the ideal-factual dichotomy in the form of the opposition between the "human element" and the "material element" of capital, and Proudhon's emphasis on the "human element" would be the main contribution of the French socialist to the criticism of bourgeois political economy. However, the evolution of Marx's thought would have determined, according to Rubin, a radical change with respect to that original position:

> From The Holy Family Marx had to move toward The Poverty of Philosophy. In the first of these works Proudhon was praised for taking as the starting point of his observations the negation of private property, but later Marx built his economic system precisely by analyzing the commodity economy based on private property.[10]

In other words, for Rubin, the transition from The Holy Family to The Poverty of Philosophy represents simply the rupture of Marx with utopian thought and the rejection of its implicit ideal-actual dichotomy. But, is it true that in The Holy Family Marx has criticized political economy from the factual-ideal dichotomy? Was he trying to understand man's existence through the study of his essence? Did he reject the use of the term "alienation" because this term was considered to have originated in a utopian theory of human nature? Already in The Economic and Philosophical Manuscript of 1844 Marx is criticizing political economy from a distinctively "marxian" point of view, i.e., not from a philosophical or utopian perspective but through the analysis of the real material conditions of the capitalist society from which political economy springs. The concept of alienation does not arise in Marx's criticism as a result of the study of man's essence but from the analysis of workers' activity in commodity producing society. Marx never rejected the employment of the concept of alienation but only its idealist use. The same could be said of concepts such as "essence", "Man in general" or "human nature" (all of them taken in its abstract and idealist sense). But this does not mean that Marx gave up all employment of the notions of essence, generic man or human nature, he only gave to these notions a different and materialist meaning. In The Holy Family, written immediately after The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, Marx simply restated, in a different context, his criticism of political economy developed in the latter work. In both works the problem of human alienation is presented in a materialist fashion. Thus, for example, Marx asks: "How...does man come to alienate his labour, to estrange it? How is this estrangement founded in the nature of human development? (EPM, p.333) Marx's attempt to understand the contradiction between existence and essence of man is always historical. And the response is identical in both works: human alienation is not the result of the contradictory character of human essence but of the contradiction between the proletarian class' "human nature and its conditions of life, which is the outright, decisive and comprehensive negation of that nature" (Holy Family, p.51).

In order to complete our criticism of Rubin's reading of The Holy Family let us see now what Marx says, in the same work, of Bauer, a left Hegelian, for considering Proudhon's criticism of political economy as a mere "negation":

> Herr Edgar, who wishes to characterize the standpoint of the treatise Qu'est ce que la propriete, naturally does not say a word of political economy or of the distinctive character of that treatise, which is precisely that it has made the essence of private property the vital question of political economy and jurisprudence. This is all self-evident for Critical Criticism. Proudhon, it says, has done nothing new by his negation of private property.[11] (Emphasis mine)

Rubin appears to be committing a similar mistake in seeing in Proudhon's work a simple moral negation of political economy, when in fact, as Marx says, its merits are derived from the critical character of its investigation of political economy. But, as Marx stresses, Proudhon's criticism "does all that a criticism of political economy from the standpoint of political economy can do".[12] But why has Proudhon not overcome the standpoint of political economy even when he has submitted private property to a critical investigation? Because, Marx will say, his criticism is based on the belief that private property is in essence a reasonable and human institution, which is not in contradiction with itself. What Proudhon does is to contrast the imagined human appearance of private property with its factual inhuman reality. And in doing so he is trying to measure the reality of bourgeois society with the illusory pattern segregated by this same society, i.e., the juridical expressions of these economic relationships. For Marx this is a basic limitation of Proudhon's criticism of political economy and therefore also of bourgeois society. This limitation, as he will say later in the Grundrisse, is rooted in "...the utopian inability to grasp the necessary difference between the real and the ideal form of bourgeois society".[13] In other words, due to Proudhon's inability to distinguish between the ideological and the material form of capitalist society his plea presents a purely utopian character, in so far as he seeks to change the negative aspects of that society, (aspects which are inherent to its material conditions) without changing the material conditions themselves

from which that negativity springs. Thus, for example, it is vainly utopian, according to Marx, to pretend the elimination of labour's alienation while maintaining at the same time wage-labour, or to endeavour the elimination of monopoly while maintaining free competition, because alienation springs from wage-labour as necessarily as monopoly stems from free competition. It is this necessary connexion, namely the one existent between the material basis of capitalist society and its negative aspects, which the utopian socialists cannot grasp. A more complete expression of this criticism of Proudhon can be found in a letter Marx wrote to Schweitzer in 1865:

> What Proudhon was actually dealing with was the existing modern bourgeois property. The question of what this is could have been answered only by a critical analysis of "Political Economy", embracing the totality of those property relations not in their juridical expression as relations of volition but in their real form, that is, as relations of production. But as [he] entangled the totality of these economic relationships in the general juristic conception of "property", Proudhon could not get beyond the answer that Brissot in a similar work, had already given before 1789: "Property is theft".[14]

Evidently the criticism of bourgeois relations of productions to which Marx alludes here is no other than his own critique of political economy, which demanded his entire productive life.

Now if we want to know Marx's expressed position in respect of any purely moral condemnation of capitalist society, even in the early writings, it is enough to quote here the following passage of The German Ideology, written about the same time as The Holy Family.

> The positive expression "human" corresponds to the definite relations predominant at a certain stage of production and the way of satisfying needs determined by them, just as the negative expression "inhuman" corresponds to the attempt to negate these predominant relations and the way of satisfying needs prevailing under them without changing the existing mode of production.[15]

A comparison of this text with the letter previously quoted reveals the invariability of Marx's position with respect to a purely utopian condemnation of capitalist society throughout his life. In 1845 as twenty years later he determines Proudhon's merits as well as his limitations

in the same terms, i.e., Proudhon is trying to obtain the abolition of the negative consequences of the capitalist mode of production without changing the mode of production itself. But this fact did not prevent Marx from appreciating the critical motivation of Proudhon's attempt. In conclusion: From the evidence cited above we are in a position to reject as unfounded Rubin's contentions. Firstly, Marx did not criticize bourgeois society from a basically moral point of view, following the utopian-socialist example. Secondly, Marx did not prize Proudhon's criticism of political economy for its moral character. And thirdly, it is insupportable to claim that Marx's theory of commodity fetishism represents a radical departure from a supposedly later abandoned theory of alienation.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER ONE

1. It is curious that, to the best of my knowledge, nobody has recognized the pioneer character of Rubin's Essays on Marx's Theory of Value in the controversy on the evolution of Marx's thought. Aside from a short reference in Mandel's The Formation of the Economic Thought of Karl Marx (p.183) there is hardly any other author who mentions the Soviet economist in this context.

2. The English edition of Rubin's Essays was made from the third Soviet edition, Moscow, 1928. I have not been able to establish the date of the first edition.

3. I.I. Rubin, Essays on Marx's Theory of Value, p.56.

4. Ibid., p.57.

5. Ibid., p.57. Of the three terms employed by Rubin in this quotation, i.e., "alienation", "reification", and "commodity fetishism", only the first will be used throughout this thesis. Even though alienation and fetishism are in fact different terms for the same doctrine in different degrees of elaboration, technically speaking fetishism (and reification) can be reserved to refer to the specific phenomenon of a mercantile society consisting in that social relations assume the form of relations among things. First in A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy (1859) and later in Capital (1867) Marx introduces the concept of fetishism in relation to the phenomenon of homogenization of labour that occurs as the basis of the commodity exchange. For Marx commodity fetishism is rooted in the peculiar social character of the labour producer of commodities. In order to measure the exchange-value of commodities by the labour time they contain, the different kinds of labour from which each commodity is the product have to be reduced to uniform, homogeneous labour; to what Marx calls in Capital abstract labour, i.e., labour of uniform quality which can only be qualitatively distinguished. This is in fact a reduction operation or an abstraction which occurs everyday in the social productive process, and which creates

> the possibility of the exchange-value of commodities. Now, when in the exchange of commodities their value appears not as the product of determinate labour processes (namely, of social relations), but as the result of qualities belonging to the physical particularities of commodities, what we have is the phenomenon of fetishism. What makes something a fetish is that it is invested with powers it does not have. Thus, in the commodity producing society, social relations among men appear in such a distorted way that it seems, for example, that capital (a thing), appears to possess the capacity to hire labour, to buy labour instruments, to combine both in a productive operation, and to yield profit, etc., when in fact capital can produce nothing. But if capital appears endowed with these productive capacities, it is simply because the human relations here involved are objectively hidden behind relations among things, because as Marx says "the relations connecting the labour of one individual with that of the rest appear, not as direct social relations between individuals at work, but as what they _really_ are [in capitalist society, H.B.] _material relations between persons and social relations between things_" _Capital_ Vol. I, p.78. (My emphasis.)

6. _Ibid._, p.58.

7. Introduction to Rubin's _Essays_ by Fredy Perlman, p.xxii.

8. Louis Althusser, _Pour Marx_, 1965.

9. Rubin, _ibid._, p.57. The passages are in Marx and Engels _The Holy Family_, p.47.

10. Rubin, _ibid._, pp.57-58.

11. Marx and Engels, _ibid._, p.48.

12. Marx and Engels, _ibid._, p.48.

13. Marx, _Grundrisse Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy_, p.249.

14. Marx, "Letter to Schweitzer" January 24, 1865, _The Letters of Karl Marx_, p.192.

15. Marx and Engels, _The German Ideology_, p.457.

CHAPTER TWO

HEGEL AND THE ORIGINS OF MARX'S THEORY OF MAN

> ...communism...it is the genuine resolution of the conflict between man and nature, and between man and man, the true resolution of the conflict between existence and essence, between objectification and self-affirmation, between freedom and necessity, between individual and species.
>
> --K. Marx, Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts (emphasis mine)

This second chapter will be dedicated to the examination of one important question relative to the relationship of Marx with Hegel. Evidently Marx's theory of man has its roots in Hegel's philosophy, but at the same time it represents a divergent conception. I believe that the philosophical question around which the similarities and differences existent between the two philosophers can be established is the theory of essence. The main criticism of Marx against his master Hegel consists in the accusation that he is not consistent with his own dialectical concepts when he identifies man's existence and essence, or which is the same, alienation and objectification.

Part A

Today it is practically an established fact that the philosophical premisses of Marx's doctrine of man can be found in Hegel's philosophy, particularly in his Phenomenology of Spirit. Nobody would claim seriously at present, as Rubin did in the thirties, that the term and

the concept of alienation reached Marx's thought through the utopian socialist. It is enough to read The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, (only published in 1932), to certify how untenable appears today Rubin's contention that the concept of alienation has a utopian-socialist origin. Marcuse has correctly called attention to the fact that Marx's doctrine of man represents a particular materialist elaboration of Hegel's doctrine of essence. One of the central ideas of Hegel's logic consists in the discovery that the discrepancy between existence and essence, or what amounts to the same, between reality and potentiality, is the condition of all dialectical process. As the philosopher of the Frankfurt School says:

> For Hegel appearance and essence are two modes of being which stand in reciprocal relation to one another, so that the existence of appearance presupposes the suppression of merely self-subsistent essence. Essence is essence only through appearing, that is, through emerging from its mere subsistence....Hegel conceives of essence as a process in which "mediated being" is posited through the overcoming of unmediated being; essence has a history...."When, further, it is said that all things have an essence, what is being expressed is that they are not in reality what they show themselves to be", "that their immediate existence does not correspond to what they are in themselves".[1]

In Marx's materialist conception this Hegelian doctrine of essence is liberated from its purely abstract and idealist character and applied in the form of the contradiction between essence and existence in man's historical reality. The Hegelian idea that there is a tension between the present state of man and what he potentially is, i.e., the recognition of the existence of a negativity in man's essence, is interpreted by Marx as the contradiction between man's nature and his conditions of existence. This important doctrine appears in Marx's thought as early as 1844. Thus, for example in The German Ideology in criticizing Feuerbach Marx expresses this idea negatively:

> As an example of Feuerbach's acceptance and at the same time misunderstanding of existing reality, ...we recall the passage in the Philosophie der Zukunft where he develops the view that the being of a thing or a man is at the same time its or his essence, that the determinate conditions of exis-

> tence, the mode of life and activity of an animal or human individual are those in which its "essence" feels itself satisfied....Thus, if millions of proletarians feel by no means contented with their living conditions, if their "being" does not in the least correspond to their "essence", then, according to the passage quoted, this is an unavoidable misfortune, which must be borne quietly. These millions of proletarians or communists, however, think quite differently and will prove this in time, when they bring their "being" into harmony with their "essence" in a practical way, by means of a revolution.[2] (Emphasis mine)

Thus, Marx rejects Feuerbach's identification of the immediate existence of man and his essence because he does not consider the contradiction between existence and essence expressed in a worker's life as an ontological and therefore immodifiable feature of man's nature. For Marx the lack of harmony between man's existence and essence is not a fact to accept or regret but something that can and must be changed by the historical praxis of the proletariat.

It is particularly interesting to notice the sense in which the term "essence" is employed by Marx in the above quoted passage. In this text Marx means by "essence of man" not a purely internal state of his being, something that exists or can be established in abstraction from its determinant conditions. But contrarily man's essence is a product of a series of conditions which appear as external to him but are in fact internally related to him. In the case of man these conditions are primarily of an objective, natural character in so far as man is an objective-natural being, an objective-natural being who must maintain a permanent exchange with nature in order to keep himself alive. According to this representation the existence and the essence of a being can be in harmony or in contradiction, depending on the specific character of the relationship of this being with its conditions of existence. If reality fails in producing these objective conditions the essence will not be realized, but negated or de-realized. In The German Ideology Marx illustrates this fact by means of an interesting example:

> The "essence" of the freshwater fish is the water of the river. But the latter ceases to be the "essence" of the fish and is no longer a suitable medium of existence as

> soon as it is polluted by dyes and other waste products and navigated by steamboats, or as soon as its water is diverted into channels where simple drainage can deprive the fish of its medium of existence.[3]

Here the concept of essence appears equated with conditions of existence. Marx seems to be employing the concept of essence in this same sense in the oft-quoted but rarely understood passage of the VI thesis on Feuerbach in which he says: "...the human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of social relations".[4] In other words, human essence is not an abstract entity present in each man but the complex of social relations which are the immediate condition of man's existence and therefore of the realization or negation of his nature. What must be kept in mind with respect to these two passages in which Marx is criticizing Feuerbach for his uncritical and ahistorical employment of the term "essence" is that Marx is not defending here a simple mechanistic reduction of man to his conditions of existence, or claiming that man is simply the passive product of his material conditions. The essence of man cannot be understood in abstraction from his material conditions, but these conditions are the product of human historical action.

Part B

Given the Hegelian affiliation of Marx's theory of man, and in order that the theory be adequately understood, it is necessary to establish to what extent it diverges from Hegel's. Perhaps the best way to make explicit the differences is by means of an examination of the central criticism raised by Marx against Hegel in his "Critique of Hegel's Dialectic and General Philosophy", which constitutes the last of The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844.

Marx accuses Hegel of equating ahistorically human existence and essence. Hegel commits this identification when he confuses alienation and objectification. One of the merits of Hegel's Phenomenology, Marx declares is that he understands the importance of labour in man's self-formative process, i.e., he conceives the transformation of man's nature

as the result of a process of objective involvement, but as Marx says:

> Hegel sees this movement of self-creation and self-objectification in the form of self-alienation and self-estrangement as the absolute and hence the final expression of human life which has itself as its aim, is at rest in itself and has attained its own essential nature.[5] (emphasis mine)

In labour man's activity is necessarily unfolded over an object or objectivity, upon which it is applied, whether this object is of a material or an ideal character. In this sense labour is a particular form of relationship of man with objects. By means of the exercise of his active powers man shapes the object, permeating it with his subjectivity. Or as Marcuse says:

> To be able to realize himself [man] needs to express himself through the pre-established objects with which he is confronted. His activity and his self-affirmation consist in the appropriation of the "externality" which confronts him, and in the transference of himself into that externality. In his labour man supersedes the mere objectivity of objects and makes them into "the means of life". He impresses upon them the form of his being, and makes them into "his work and his reality". The objective piece of finished work is the reality of man; man is as he has realized himself in the object of his labour.[6]

This process is precisely what Marx understands by objectification. Now, for Hegel this process of objectification of human powers in labour appears necessarily connected with man's serfdom and loss of the object of his activity, i.e., with alienation in Marx's sense. Marx understands by "alienation" the complex historical phenomenon in which man is enslaved in the process of unfolding his own productive powers: The objects that human productive activity create stand as a power independent of the producer. Since human activity is performed upon a material object its result is a transformed object, crystallized labour, labour concretized in an object. This is the process of objectification. But in the commodity producing (bourgeois) society this process of objectification of human activity becomes at the same time a process of loss of the produced object and of serfdom to it, which operates in such a way that the more man (the worker) produces the more he becomes victim of the external objective power of the objects. For Hegel, but not for

Marx, these two processes, objectivation and alienation, are inseparable. In other words, what Marx would view as alienation is conceived by Hegel as an ontological condition of man's unfolding of his productive powers, of all human objectification.

For Marx this identification of alienation and objectification is rooted in the last instance in Hegel's idealist conception of man, i.e., in the fact that he conceives man under the form of pure self-consciousness, so that he reduces the process of man's self-objectification to a purely abstract process, in so far as objectification is conceived as something which occurs only to a self-consciousness in the movement of self-recognition. As a result of this the true relationship between "mental" and "material" estrangement appears turned upside down. Feuerbach stated before Marx that the true relationship of thought to being is that "being is the subject, thought the predicate".[7] In other words, thought is derived from being, not being from thought. Marx expressed the same conception when he says in his Critique of Hegel's Doctrine of State that:

> Hegel has turned into a product, a predicate of the Idea, what is in reality its subject. Instead of developing his thought from an object (Gegenstand), he develops the object in accordance with a manner of thinking which is predetermined, which has reached its finished form in the abstract sphere of logic.[8] (Emphasis mine)

For Hegel's idealist ontology that which is but the subjective expression of the objective human alienation, i.e., the estrangement of self-consciousness, appears as the real alienation; while the objective estrangement of man's nature is reduced to a mere appearance of alienation, to the appearance of the estrangement of what is for Hegel the "real human nature", namely, self-consciousness.

The false identification of objectification and alienation is ultimately derived from Hegel's metaphysical interpretation of the process of objectification as leading to the transcendence of objectivity itself. The supersession of alienation, the appropriation of the estranged objective being, is basically equivalent for Hegel to the supersession of objectivity itself, namely to the negation of the true reality

of being. Insofar as human essence has been defined by Hegel as pure self-consciousness, objectivity appears as an alienated human relationship which does not correspond to man's essence. For this reason all process of man's reappropriation of his estranged objective reality is reduced to a pure "incorporation into self-consciousness" (EPM, p.387). The mechanism of alienation is conceived thus as a movement of consciousness which establishes objectivity as a moment of mediation necessary for its self-realization. Against this idealist representation of objectivity and objectification Marx will say that the reality established by self-consciousness in this way is nothing but a pure abstraction and not a genuine reality.

At this point of Marx's criticism of Hegel there seems to arise a problem. Marx has contended initially that in reversing the true relationship between subject and predicate, Hegel is presenting the objective alienation of human essence as ontologically rooted, as absolute. But at the same time Marx has declared that the objective alienation of man has been reduced by Hegel to a mere appearance of what is for him the truly objective alienation: the alienation of self-consciousness. These two statements seem to contradict each other. However, the contradiction is only apparent. The apparent contradiction is derived from the fact that the Hegelian inversion of subject and predicate presents a double and contradictory character in itself. It is true that the objective estrangement of man's essence is reduced by Hegel to a simple predicate of the estrangement of self-consciousness, namely, the real estrangement is presented as derived from the ideal one. As Marx says in The Holy Family:

> ...the absolute idealist, in order to be an absolute idealist, must necessarily go constantly through the sophistic process of first transforming the world outside himself into an apparent being, a mere fancy of its own brain....[9]

But this transformation is in itself also a twofold speculative manipulation. On its negative side is the reduction of objective, empirical reality to mere appearance (being is reduced to thinking); on its posi-

tive side it is equivalent to the presentation of thinking as the sensuous objective world (thought is not thought anymore but being). In spite of all these manipulations Hegel cannot but accept empirical reality as it is. It is true that the real has been reduced to mere phenomenon, to an appearance of the Idea, "but the Idea has no content over and above this phenomenon".[10] Thus, the factual alienation of man, even though it has been idealistically transmuted, is at the same time invested with an ontological character. This is the meaning of what Marx has called "the uncritical positivism of Hegel", his "restauration" of man's present reality (EPM, p.385). For Marx this is not only the basis of Hegel's identification of man's existence and essence but also the negation of the dialectic theory of essence.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER TWO

1. H. Marcuse, "The Concept of Essence", Negations: Essays in Critical Theory, pp.67-68. The internal quotations are from Hegel.

2. Marx and Engels, The German Ideology, p.66.

3. Marx and Engels, ibid., p.66.

4. Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach", Marx's Early Writings, p.423.

5. Marx, Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, Marx's Early Writings, p.396.

6. H. Marcuse, "The Foundations of Historical Materialism", Studies in Critical Theory, p.23.

7. L. Feuerbach, Anthropologischer Materialismus. Quoted by David McLellan, Marx Before Marxism, p.142.

8. Marx, Critique of Hegel's Doctrine of the State. Quoted by S. S. Prawer, Karl Marx and World Literature, pp.57-58.

9. Marx and Engels, The Holy Family, p.188.

10. Marx, ibid., Marx's Early Writings, p.63.

CHAPTER THREE

ON A CERTAIN CRITICISM OF MARX'S THEORY OF ALIENATION

> How, we now ask, does man come to alienate his labour, to estrange it? How is this estrangement founded in the nature of human development? We have already gone a long way toward solving this problem by transforming the question of the origin of private property into the question of the relationship of alienated labour to the course of human development. For in speaking of private property one imagines that one is dealing with something external to man. In speaking of labour one is dealing immediately with man himself. This new way of formulating the problem already contains its solution.
>
> --K. Marx, Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts

Part A

In order to show how the materialist doctrine of the contradiction between essence and existence works in Marx's theory of human nature, I will examine now some recent criticisms of his theory of Alienation, which will show us indirectly the function of this theory in Marx's doctrine of man.

The first of the criticisms referred to is presented by Sidney Hook in the "New Introduction" to his book From Hegel to Marx in which he states that:"...aside from the specific sociological doctrine of 'the

fetishism of commodity'...the central notion of 'self alienation' is foreign to the historical, naturalistic humanism of Marx".[1]

The same is contended by Hook only a page later: "It is easy to show that the notion of human alienation--except for the sociological meaning it has in Capital--is actually foreign to Marx's conception of Man".[2]

Hook believes he can substantiate his claim by means of three arguments: (1) To say that the nature of man is alienated from itself would mean that we agreed upon an ideal or norm of what human nature should be; which is equivalent to the claim that there exists a fixed and constant human essence from which man would be self-alienated, a doctrine clearly rejected by Marx. (2) To speak of human alienation implies that one would assert (in Aristotelian fashion) that the fullfilment of man's natural set of potentialities represents an authentic mode of life, and that all others are conceived as being inauthentic. (3) Marx's view that man makes himself or creates his own nature renders untenable most notions of human self-alienation, because, due to the fact that man is free, he can choose different paths of development, thus conflicting with any ideal conception of man's nature.

It is plain that the above presented arguments are based on the same implicit assumption; the idea that the human nature or essence cannot be conceived in any other way than as an "ideal" of what man "should be". Hook is obviously aware of the specificity of Marx's conception of human nature but he cannot reconcile it with his own misleading representation of the marxian concept of alienation. But Hook is not alone in this mistake. In a similar way Leszek Kolakowski is a victim of identical misunderstanding when in a recent book he states that:

> The idea of man's recovery of his own self is in fact comprised in that of alienation, which Marx continued to employ [in his mature work HB] for alienation is nothing but a process in which man deprives himself of what he truly is, of his own humanity. To speak in these terms implies, of course, that we know what man "truly" is as opposed to what he empirically is: what the content of human nature is, conceived of not as a set of features which may be empirically ascertained but as a set of

> requirements that must be fulfilled in order to make human beings genuinely human. Without some such standard, vague though it may be, "alienation" has no meaning. Accordingly, wherever Marx uses this term he presupposes, expressly or otherwise, a non historical or prehistorical norm of humanity....The idea of freedom from alienation, and thus of alienation itself, requires a preliminary value judgement and an idea of what "humanity" means.[3] (Emphasis mine)

The basic question at stake in these criticisms of Marx's doctrine of alienation is in fact the materialist conception of the historical contradiction between human essence and existence, which is the real foundation of that doctrine. Thus, the point is that the aforementioned critics cannot perceive the necessary relationship between the historical negative existence of man and his positive essence. The understanding of this crucial question can only be obtained by means of an analysis of the meaning of the concept of labour in Marx's early writings. According to Marx labour represents the form of human activity that define man's relationship with his surrounding world. Man is a bodily being whose existence can only be maintained if he keeps a permanent exchange with what Marx called his "inorganic body", i.e. external nature. This is so because man is a natural being, firstly in the sense that he is a product of nature, but also natural insofar as he is a being of needs, a being dependent in his individual and species-existence form on the material elements that nature furnishes him in innumerable forms. This dependence on nature is expressed in the fact that man is endowed, like the animals, with powers and capacities to apprehend or consume the elements provided by his environment. But these powers, that in the animal are nothing but biological tools for the direct appropriation of the substances and the elements indispensible for the conservation of the individual and his species, present in man a distinctive character, for to him the exchange with nature is not a direct one but requires the mediation of work in order to adapt the natural elements to the specifically human modes of appropriation. While the animal in its appropriation of the objective world is completely limited to instinctive determinations, man has broken such natural determination thanks to work:

> It is true that animals also produce. They build nests and dwellings, like the bee, the beaver, the ant, etc. But they produce only their own immediate needs or those of their young; they produce one-sidedly, while man produces universally; they produce only when immediate physical need compels them to do so, while man produces even when he is free from such need; they produce only themselves; while man reproduces the whole of nature; their products belong immediately to their physical body, while man freely confronts his own product. Animals produce only according to the standards and needs of the species to which they belong, while man is capable of producing according to the standards of every species and of applying to its object its inherent standard; hence man also produces in accordance with the laws of beauty.[4]

But in thus acting upon external nature in order to make it conform to human modes of appropriation man changes at the same time his own nature. In so far as man incorporates his own forces in natural objects these acquire a new social quality that they did not have originally. Thus, the initial relation between man and nature is transformed in a new relation of him with a modified nature, which will act in its turn upon man, and in this way in an always changing process of action and reaction of the two terms of this dialectic in which man plays the more active and determinate role. What is however very important here is to understand that this process of transformation of nature by man and of man by a transformed nature is necessarily and at the same time a process of transformation of man by society, by other men, in so far as the transformation of nature occurs always in the frame of a determined society, or as Marx says:

> In the process of production, human beings work not only upon nature, but also upon one another. They produce only by working together in a specified manner and reciprocally exchanging their activities. In order to produce, they enter into definite connections and relations to one another, and only within these social connections and relations does their influence upon nature [and of nature upon them, I could add (HB)] operate, i.e., does production take place.[5]

From all this it is clear that work plays the central role in the shaping of human nature, that man cannot change nature without chang-

ing at the same time his own nature. But there is a closely related character of labour, which is essential for the understanding of Marx's theory of alienation, that must be taken into consideration if we want to nullify the aforementioned criticisms of Hook and Kolakowski, namely that labour is the key to human nature. The point here is not to understand the meaning of labour as the distinctive feature of man but to recognize the fact that human essence is revealed in labour, that labour is the manifestation or activity of man's essence. This rarely considered characteristic of labour and one of the pivotal concepts of Marx's doctrine of human nature is explicitly referred to in the following passages of the Manuscripts of 1844: "It can be seen how the history of industry and the objective existence of industry as it has developed is the open book of the essential powers of man, man's psychology present in tangible form."[6]

Or a few lines earlier: "In everyday, material industry...we find ourselves confronted with the objectified powers of the human essence, in the form of sensuous, alien, useful objects, in the form of estrangement" (my emphasis).[7]

Firstly, it is important to keep in mind that in these texts Marx is using the term "industry" to refer to human productive activity in its more general sense. What Marx is saying then is that in labour, in spite of its alienation in a commodity producing society, can be discovered the "true" human essence, that in his praxis man comes to know his own essence. This is equivalent to saying that we do not need to resort to any ideal or non-historical standard of what man "should be" because, as Marx says: "In speaking of labour one is dealing immediately with man himself" (MEP, p.333). In other words, alienation is for Marx not only the distorted realization of man's powers in history but also the inverted or dialectical expression of them. The apparition or manifestation of human essence in the form of alienated labour conceals but at the same expresses man's true essence. Marx does not conceive human essence and human existence as two separate entities but as two aspects of a dialectical relationship. According to this account the

manifestation of human essence in historical existence is never complete. Thus, Marx not only sees human essence and human existence in constant contrast throughout history, but at the same time he discovers that through this contradiction three important things are revealed: (1) Labour is the "foundation" of human nature. That is why labour can be the key for the discovering of the true essence of man. (2) Labour's alienation is the fundamental form of alienation because as Marx says: "the whole of human servitude is involved in the relation of worker to production" (EPM, p.333), therefore; (3) Labour's emancipation is equivalent to the human universal emancipation. Meszaros has put this in an unequalled way:

> ...Marx realizes that the non-alienated foundation of that which is reflected in an alienated form in political economy as a particular sphere is the fundamental ontological sphere of human existence and therefore it is the ultimate foundation of all kinds and forms of activity. Thus, labour, in its "sensuous form", assumes its universal significance in Marx's philosophy. It becomes not only the key to understanding the determinations inherent in all forms of alienation but also the centre of reference of his practical strategy aimed to the actual supersession of capitalistic alienation.[8]

Only now can we see the true meaning of the already referred to criticisms of Hook and Kolakowski, for they were originated in the incomprehension of the necessary relationship, in Marx's thought, between the negative existence of labour and its positive essence. Thus for the critics it would be inadequate to speak of alienation of the human essence, because that is equivalent to saying either: (1) That human nature is unchangeable (a doctrine expressly rejected by Marx) or, (2) That human nature is conceived as an ideal and thus as something impossible to anticipate or establish. However, all these objections stem from a basic mistake. With respect to point number two I have already furnished the conceptual elements that make this contention untenable but my criticisms will be developed further. As far as point number one is concerned, it is grounded in another complementary misunderstanding of Marx's concept of man. I believe this point can be

clarified by means of the following example. Suppose we want to determine to what extent a certain man is in accordance with the bodily human essence. What we would do in this case is simply to compare him with a physically normal man, i.e., with someone who has all the bodily features of a man; he has a head, two arms and two legs, is capable of erect walking, has an adequate proportion among the different parts of his body, etc., etc. It is plain that the human bodily essence consists in a set of features which allow the existence of multifarious variations in terms of proportion, stature, colour, etc. Now suppose we see a man from whom an arm has been amputated. We immediately detect the discrepancy between his bodily essence and his body. This discrepancy appears manifest to us because we have always known the essential bodily features of man. But what would happen in the hypothetical case of an existence whose essence is completely unknown to us? Apparently we would be completely deprived of the possibility of contrasting such existence with its essential pattern. An identical situation will occur in the case of existences that present a completely changing essence. Curiously this is exactly the situation faced by Marx's critics when they state that it is impossible to speak of alienation of human essence because that would be equivalent to saying that human nature is unchangeable. Evidently Marx repeatedly states that human nature or essence is not unchangeable but historical and in permanent social modification. But this has been mistakenly understood by a great number of his critics as meaning that Marx conceives no constant ontological features in man's nature. This is of course a doctrine completely foreign to Marx's thought. For Marx the ontologically constant aspect of man's nature is derived from his bodily, natural and dependent condition which forces him to a permanent exchange with the surrounding world, an exchange which in the human species assumes the form of an active transformation and reproduction of the world in order to adapt it to the specifically human modes of appropriation; this process is none other than the labour process, which is defined in Capital as:

> ...the necessary condition for effecting exchange of matter between man and nature, it is the everlasting nature imposed condition of human existence and therefore is of every social phase of that existence, or rather, is common to every such phase.[9]

This is for Marx the constant factor of human nature and it is precisely through this factor that we can discover humanity's potentialities even under its historically distorted expressions. What is important to understand adequately is that this permanent factor of human nature is for Marx constant in a very specific sense. Marx is not saying that there is something like a constant entity which is common to all existing and possible men, but simply that in every historical situation man must work in order to reproduce his existence. Needless to say, when Marx talks of a constant factor he does not mean that the material conditions which made possible man's organic exchange with nature are always the same. What he means is that labour is a permanent "mode" of man's relationship with nature, whose historical forms are in permanent modification. To say it in a paradoxical fashion: what is constant in man's existence, and therefore in his essence, is the ever changing process of reproduction of his life.

I have already alluded to the marxian employment of the concept of essence in the sense of meaning "conditions of existence". When applied to man this signification presents its more developed dialectical expression because in man labour is not only a condition of his existence but an internal condition. Whereas animals have their essence outside themselves man has his own in himself, in so far as he is capable of creating his environment and thus indirectly of creating his own nature.

It is interesting to contrast Marx's concept of human nature with the idea of a constant nature of man. Apparently the necessity of postulating an unmodifiable nature of man is based on the necessity of accounting theoretically for the similarities among men in different societies or historical epochs, whereas the differences in man's historical expressions are explained, according to this conception, in

terms of differences in the environmental conditions throughout time and space, in different societies. Marx does not conceive of things in these terms. For him the similarities of men in different epochs or societies are the result of the constant and necessary condition of the reproduction of man's existence, in the different environmental or historical situations: that is, the similarities are the result of man's mediated relationship with nature through labour. Complementarily, the differences of men in the different epochs and societies are for Marx not simply the result of different natural or environmental conditions, (because all natural conditions operate in history as functions of social organizations, never vice versa), but of different modes of production, of different organizations of labour in the respective societies. In other words, for Marx, both the differences and similarities of men in different societies are the result of the determined and specific character of the social relations under which men live, and these social relations are not determined by nature but are the product of man's own praxis.

Only keeping in mind all that has been said with respect to the concept of nature or essence can we understand adequately the true sense of the key formulations of The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts and the character of Marx's indictment of bourgeois society. Marx did not need to have recourse to a utopian conception of the nature of man, a conception of what he "should be", conceived in complete abstraction from the concrete historical conditions of man's existence, in order to condemn the society based on commodity production. For Marx it was sufficient to examine the conditions in which human activity was developing in order to discover that those conditions constitute the complete negation of the realization of every human faculty, or at the most the particularist realization of the powers of man. This can be detected for example in the following texts of the young Marx:

> Political Economy conceals the estrangement in the nature of labour by ignoring the direct relationship between the worker (labour) and production. It is true that labour produces marvels for the rich but it produces privation

> for the worker. It produces palaces, but hovels for the worker. It produces beauty, but deformity for the worker. It replaces labour by machines, but it casts some of the workers back into barbarous forms of labour and turn others into machines. It produces intelligence, but it produces idiocy and cretinism for the worker.[10]

Or in another passage, this time in The Holy Family:

> The propertied class and the proletariat present the same human self-alienation. But the former class finds in this self-alienation its confirmation and its good, its own power: it has in it a semblance of human existence. The class of the proletariat feels annihilated in its self-alienation; it sees in it its own powerlessness and the reality of an inhuman existence.[11]

As these passages testify, for Marx the existence of the contradictory results of the unfolding of human social activity shows at least two important things: (1) By its own nature labour does not produce only estrangement but also the expression, even though distorted, of human positive powers. (2) The alienation of the worker is at the same time the confirmation of the power of another human being; the proprietor of the means of production. That is, such human powers, however historically transfigured, cannot represent in essence but different modes of human appropriation and mastering of nature, different modes of enrichment and potentiation of human forces. This doctrine of human faculties can be detected "at work" throughout the entire manuscript known under the name of Estranged Labour as its constant presupposition. We will return to this later. Without this doctrine of human faculties it is utterly impossible to make any sense of such passages as the following:

> ...what a paradox it would be if the more man subjugates nature through his labour and the more divine miracles are made superfluous by the miracles of industry, the more he is forced to forego the joy of production, and the enjoyment of the product out of deference to this power.[12]

Why would this be a paradox? Has Marx not shown throughout the entire first manuscript that precisely this paradox expresses the true essence of commodity producing society? As Marx himself declares expressly in the following passage:

> In the progressing condition of society the destruction and impoverishment of the worker is the product of his own labour and the wealth he has himself produced. Misery thus springs from the nature of the prevailing mode of labour and is rooted in the very essence of modern society.[13]

So the paradox can be resolved only by bringing to bear the concept of faculty by means of which Marx apprehends the problem of alienated labour in capitalist society. Hence what would constitute a true paradox for Marx is to accept uncritically, as political economy does, that alienation is the "natural" or "necessary" consequence of the unfolding of all human productive power, of human labour. Marx will insist on this point more than twenty years later in Capital when he declares:

> Nature does not produce on the one side owners of money or commodities, and on the other men possessing nothing but their own labour power. This relation has no natural basis, neither is its social basis one that is common to all historical periods.[14]

Hence, Marx rejects the idea that alienation is a necessary and unavoidable result of a certain ontological determination of labour, and this rejection constitutes one of the permanent features of his thought.

Part B

In connexion with the question of the historical character of alienation let us examine here briefly Martin Nicolaus' appreciation of the distinction between objectification and alienation in Marx's early work, contained in the Foreword to the English translation of the Grundrisse. There Nicolaus claims that:

> The earlier writing, notably Economic Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844 ("Paris Manuscripts") were less than altogether unambiguous on the question whether "alienation" was to be conceived as a universal, eternal human condition, or whether it was rooted in the particular historical mode of capitalist production and hence transitory. This state of less than total consistency and clarity variously "grounded" itself in, and expressed itself as, identification of the concept "alienation" with the concept "objectification". Since objectification--that is, making things--is inseparable from any human society more advanced than gathering berries, the identification of the two terms

> could willfully be interpreted as Marx's "vision" of alienation forever. In the Grundrisse the issue is met squarely and altogether consistently. To quote only a brief excerpt from one passage among many: "The bourgeois economists are so much cooped up within the notions belonging to a specific historic stage of social development that the necessity of the objectification of the powers of social labour appears to them as inseparable from their alienation vis-a-vis living labour".[15]

Evidently the alleged lack of consistency and clarity are here Nicolaus' own contributions to the interpretation of Marx's early writings. As always what is at the bottom of this type of misunderstanding of Marx's ideas is the lack of perception of the role of the concept of alienation in his theory of human nature. A furnishing of texts and an adequate reading will reveal immediately the mistake of Nicolaus' position on this important question. If Marx had believed for a moment that alienation is an "eternal human condition" we would have no way to understand for example his own conception of communist society as:

> The positive supersession of private property as human self-estrangement and hence the true appropriation of the human essence through and for man...[as]...the true resolution of the conflict between existence and essence, between objectification and self-affirmation, etc., etc.[16]

More strongly put: If Marx had believed in the ontological character of human alienation any project of transcendence of it would have been utterly absurd, nonsensical. From this perspective it is manifest that already in 1844 Marx clearly conceived alienation as a transitory historical state of man, or which is the same, he understood the difference between objectification and alienation. But this is only a part, and perhaps not the most important, of the reasons for rejecting Nicolaus' position. If he were right the whole criticism of Hegel's philosophy accomplished by the young Marx would be reduced too to pure nonsense. For example how could we understand the following passage of the IV Manuscript in which Marx criticizes Hegel's doctrine of alienation. In the initial pages of it Marx has declared:

> ...let us observe that Hegel adopts the standpoint of modern political economy. He sees labour as the essence

> of man; he sees the positive and not the negative side of labour (labour is man's coming to be for himself within alienation or as the alienated man).[17]

And a few pages further he develops his criticism as follows:

> Hegel grasps man's self-estrangement, alienation of being, loss of objectivity and loss of reality as self-discovery, expression of being, objectification and realization. In short, he sees labour--within abstraction--as man's act of self-creation and man's relation to himself as an alien being as the emergence of species-consciousness and species life.
>
> But in Hegel, apart from or rather as a consequence of the inversion we have already described, this act appears, firstly, to be merely formal because it is abstract and because human nature itself is seen only as abstract thinking, as self-consciousness. And secondly, because the conception is formal and abstract, the supersession of alienation becomes a confirmation of alienation. In other words, Hegel sees this movement of self-creation and self-objectification in the form of self-alienation and self-estrangement as the <u>absolute</u> and hence the final expression of human life which has itself as its aim, is at rest in itself and has attained its own essential nature.[18] (Emphasis mine)

What these quotations show conclusively is that in 1844 Marx already distinguished clearly between objectification and alienation, and that the identification of them is one of Marx's main criticisms of Hegel's conception of man and man's alienation. But besides that the distinction between objectification and alienation plays such an important role in Marx's own doctrine of man that without it the <u>Manuscripts</u> as a whole are utterly incomprehensible.

But perhaps the more astonishing confirmation of the mistake of Nicolaus' position is derived from the fact that the text of the <u>Grundrisse</u>[19] he has quoted (to show the opposition between Marx's early and mature thought on the question of Alienation versus Objectification) to our surprise seems to be the exact translation, in the new language of the mature Marx, of the same passage of the <u>Manuscripts</u> we have quoted above. McLellan[20] and other commentators have indicated that Marx used his early notebooks of 1843-45 even for the composition of <u>Capital</u>.

Thus it would not be strange to find entire passages of the Manuscripts of 1844 reproduced or "translated" into the new language of the Grundrisse written thirteen years later. An attentive reading of both texts will show, over the manifest textual differences, a complete convergence in terms of doctrine in 1844 and in 1857. In the Grundrisse Marx is not concerned any more with the criticism of Hegel's doctrine of alienation but with the criticism of political economy. However, as Lucio Colletti[21] has correctly emphasized, Marx's criticism of Hegel furnishes the key to his subsequent criticism of political economy. In Manuscripts Marx states that "Hegel adopts the standpoint of modern political economy",[22] and for that reason it is not surprising that criticism of political economy in Grundrisse and in Capital follows the same line as the criticism of Hegelian philosophy. The objection is the same in both cases, i.e., the rejection of the idea (of Hegel and political economy) that objectification and alienation are inseparable terms, an idea obtained from an uncritical acceptance of the present conditions of economic reality in which the objectification of all human power appears necessarily accompanied by its alienation. But for Marx this is only the historical inversion of the essential character of human activity in capitalist society and not its absolute or ontological condition. The term "inversion" is key here in so far as it shows one more time the philosophical genesis of Marx criticism of political economy; for its constitutes one of the central concepts of Marx's criticism of Hegel not only in the Manuscripts but in his Critique of Hegel's doctrine of State as well.[23]

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER THREE

1. S. Hook, From Hegel to Marx, p.5.

2. S. Hook, ibid., p.6.

3. L. Kolakowski, Main Currents of Marxism Vol.I, p.265.

4. Marx, Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, K. Marx Early Writings, p.329.

5. Marx, Wage-Labour and Capital, K. Marx and F. Engels Selected Works Vol.I, p.159.

6. Marx, Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, K. Marx Early Writings, p.354.

7. Marx, ibid., p.354.

8. I. Meszaros, Marx's Theory of Alienation, p.88.

9. Marx, Capital, A Critique of Political Economy Vol.I, p.179.

10. Marx, Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, K. Marx Early Writings, pp.325-26.

11. Marx and Engels, The Holy Family, p.51.

12. Marx, ibid., p.330.

13. From Marx's Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, quoted by H. Marcuse, Reason and Revolution, p.274.

14. Marx, Capital, A Critique of Political Economy Vol.I, p.166.

15. M. Nicolaus, foreword to his English translation of Marx's Grundrisse, Foundations of The Critique of Political Economy, p.50.

16. Marx, Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, K. Marx Early Writings, p.348.

17. Marx, ibid., p.386.

18. Marx, ibid., pp.395-96.

19. The complete text of the Grundrisse is the following:
> The bourgeois economists are so much cooped up within the notions of belonging to a specific historic stage of social development that the necessity of objectivation of the powers of social labour appears to them as inseparable from their alienation vis-a-vis living labour. But what the suspension of the immediate character of living labour, as merely individual, or as general merely internally or merely externally, with the positing of the activity of individuals as immediately general or social activity, the objective moments of production are stripped of this form of alienation; they are thereby posited as property, as the organic social body within which the individuals reproduce themselves as individuals, but as social individuals.
> Marx, Grundrisse (Notebook VII), p.832.

20. D. MacLellan, Introduction to his selection: The Grundrisse, Karl Marx, p.12. Also T. Carver, Karl Marx Texts on Methode, pp.38-39.

21. L. Colletti, Introduction to Karl Marx, Early Writings, pp.24 and 40.

22. Marx, Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, K. Marx Early Writings, p.386.

23. For an interesting account of the meaning of the concept of inversion in Marx's work, see L. Colletti cit. Introduction to Karl Marx Early Writings.

CHAPTER FOUR

POWER, HUMAN NATURE AND ALIENATION

> ...what is wealth other than the universality of individual needs, capacities, pleasures, productive forces etc., created through universal exchange? The full development of human mastery over the forces of nature, those of so-called nature as well as of humanity's own nature? The absolute working-out of his creative potentialities, with no presupposition other than the previous historic development, which makes this totality of development, i.e., the development of all human powers as such the end in itself, not as measured on a predetermined yardstick?
>
> --K. Marx, Grundrisse

To return to our main line of argumentation it is necessary to examine now a little further the meaning of the concept of power (Kraft)[1] as it is employed by Marx in the texts under consideration, in order to comprehend better its function in the theory of human nature. According to Marx a power or faculty can be defined as the capacity to perform a determinate action or establish a particular relationship with external reality. Man is endowed with certain capacities due to his natural character:

> As a natural being and as a living natural being he is ...equipped with natural powers, with vital powers, he is an active natural being; these powers exist in him as dispositions and capacities, as drives.[2]

These powers are called by Marx vital powers because their constant actualization makes possible the reproduction of the life of individuals and so that of the species. The function of all these powers is thus

to maintain and reproduce human nature in so far as that is determined by the satisfaction of certain needs. To every need there is its corresponding power capable of satisfying it. Every power represents a specific and particular mode of appropriation of the world by man, or as Marx called it; an "ontological affirmation".[3] It is interesting to notice the fact that in order to explain this notion of power, Marx always employs the senses as illustrative examples. For example in the manuscript named "private property and communism" Marx explains the specificity and role of the human powers as follows:

> An object is different for the eye from what it is for the ear, and the eye's object is different from the ear's. The peculiarity of each essential power is precisely its peculiar mode of its objectification, of its objectively real, living being. Man is therefore affirmed in the objective world not only in thought but with all the senses.[4]

Every sense is a special way of relating man with his world, a particular form of apprehension of external reality and in this way a particular kind of human affirmation, i.e., the realization of a partial aspect of human essence; or as Marx himself put it:

> Man appropriates his integral essence in an integral way, as a total man. All his human relations to the world--seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling, thinking, contemplating, sensing, wanting, acting, loving--in short, all the organs of his individuality, like the organs which are directly communal in form, are in their objective approach or in their approach to the object the appropriation of that object. This appropriation of human reality, their approach to the object, is the confirmation of human reality.[5]

Marx does not limit the meaning of the word "sense" in these passages only to denote the so called "five senses" but rather he calls sense all expression of human appropriation of the world.[6] The complementary implication of man's dependency on objective, external reality consists in the limited and suffering character of his existence:

> ...as a natural, corporeal, sensuous, objective being he is a suffering, conditioned and limited being, like animals and plants.[7]
> To be sensuous is to suffer (to be subjected to the actions of another).[8]

But the point to understand is that contrary to the animal's, man's dependency on external nature is not a direct and immediate one. In the case of animals the realization of their powers, the satisfaction of their necessities, has a pure and direct natural character consisting, for example, in obtaining the organic substances necessary for their physical preservation, etc. In man the confirmation of his powers is also conditioned by objects most of which are perhaps still of a natural character, but almost without exception all of them are socially mediated, i.e., they are the product of human labour. Even things such as animals and plants, which appear to us as purely natural products, are in fact in their actual form the result of a long historical process of gradual transformation by means of labour. As a consequence of this mediated relationship with nature through labour the natural dependency of man has become one of a social character. This fact represents, at least potentially, an advantage of man over animals. For one thing, in the animal world the realization of powers, or satisfaction of animal necessities, is possible only for the species but not for every single one of its members. This is for two main reasons: (1) Because they depend directly on nature, animals are constantly exposed to scarcity; (2) Because a considerable number of animals must serve as an indispensable organic material for the nutrition of the rest of the members of the species. In man, as a result of his necessarily mediated relationship with nature through labour, those two forms of animal dependency on nature are no longer necessary. The perpetuation of the human species does not require that some of its members have to serve as material of nourishment for the rest. Man can produce what is necessary for all, thus overcoming natural scarcity, at least at a certain high level of development of his productive powers.

But the mentioned advantage of man over animals had historically turned into a true disadvantage:

> In tearing away the object of his production from man, estranged labour therefore tears away from him his species-life, his true species-objectivity and transforms

> his advantage [my emphasis, H.B.] over animals into the disadvantage[9] that his inorganic body, nature, is taken away from him.

Thus, when in capitalist society man is victim of the alienation of his product he is in fact reduced to a sub-animal condition. Man cannot reproduce his own life any more. Thus, the advantage that he has over the animals--consisting in the fact that he is not directly dependent on what nature can provide, but he can produce what he needs and create and fashion collectively his own objective world--is reverted into a disadvantage in so far as man has been deprived even of the animal capacity of reproducing his own life.

Hence what has apparently occurred is that man's mediated relation with nature has simply replaced a kind of dependence by another, dependence on nature by dependence on other men. Not even the particularist realization of the animal powers and needs in the natural world seems to have been superseded in the human world. It is true that in any developed human society men are not the nourishment of men anymore, but the possibility of development of the majority of the members of the species is still determined, in spite of the productive powers of labour, by the scarcity of resources. But is this all the modification that labour has produced in man's existence? No, says Marx, in spite of its negative expression in human history labour has created in its development the material conditions for the liberation of the human species not only from nature but from any group of men. This universal liberation will be possible thanks to the gigantic expansion of the social productive forces accomplished in capitalist society through the scientific and technological appropriation of wage labour. If human liberation has so far simply meant the particularist realization of a few, this is simply because of the limitation of the material productivity of society. As Marx puts it in the central pages of The German Ideology:

> All emancipation carried through hitherto has been based ...on restrictive productive forces. The production which these productive forces could provide was insufficient for the whole of society and made development possible only

> if some persons satisfied their needs at the expense of others, and therefore some--the minority--obtained the monopoly of development, while others--the majority--owing to the constant struggle to satisfy their most essential needs, were for the time being (i.e., until the creation of new revolutionary productive forces) excluded from any development.[10]

The universal emancipation of man will be possible only as a result of the universal development of the social productive forces, and as Marx has recognized in different works it is the historical merit of the capitalist mode of production to have established the basis of this development.[11] Without this precondition socialism would lack any material justification:

> ...what would lead the socialists to the idea of raising higher demands if they did not presuppose this higher development of the forces of social production, brought about by wage labour? The latter is rather the presupposition of their demands.[12]

For Marx, therefore, the universal realization of man's powers demands as its necessary precondition the liberation of man from his material dependency, not only from nature but also from other men or society. But perhaps on this point a further clarification is required. Marx's critics usually miss the dialectical connexion between the theory of transcendence of alienation and the concept of alienation in itself. By now it should be clear that Marx rejects the doctrine which conceives alienation as an inavoidable ontological determination of human existence. What may not be evident however is that Marx establishes his project of transcendence of alienation on the basis of recognition of the ontological insuperability of man's heteronomy grounded in his natural and limited condition. In other words, Marx does not contend that man must seek the transcendence of <u>all</u> heteronomy, and try to get a kind of absolute unconditionality, or something of that sort.[13] In this sense Kamenka[14] is wrong when he interprets Marx's concept of alienation as applicable to any form of man's dependence on or heteronomy from physical or natural conditions out of his control. Marx reserves the term "alienation" for that phenomenon of historical character (i.e.,

not ontological), only fully developed in the commodity producing society, in which man becomes victim of the unfolding of his own powers, namely, when as a result of his own action he transforms his autonomy into heteronomy.

Notice, in this respect for example, how Marx, in The German Ideology criticizes the "true socialists" because they conceive human free activity as absolute independence:

> We see here...what the true socialists understand by "free activity". Our author imprudently reveals to us that free activity is activity which "is not determined by things external to us", i.e., actus purus, pure, absolute activity, which is nothing but activity and is in the last instance tantamount to the illusion of "pure thought". It naturally sullies the purity of this activity if it has a material basis and a material result; the true socialists deal only reluctantly with impure activity of this kind; he despises its product, which he terms "a mere refuse of man", and not "a result" (p.169). The subject from whom this pure activity proceeds cannot, therefore, be a real sentient human being; it can only be the thinking mind.[15]

According to all this it is clear that for Marx the aspiration to supersede all heteronomy would be equivalent to a purely abstract and idealist utopia, in so far as it is an aspiration in no way grounded in man's real ontological determinations. But at the same time Marx shows that the origin of this aspiration resides in the illusion of pure thought when it considers itself as a monad, closed in itself, not needing any externality to realize its abstract existence. But the subject of this process Marx will say in The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844 is only "the philosopher, himself an abstract form of alienated man, [who has] set himself up as the measure of the alienated world".[16]

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER FOUR

1. English translators of 1844 Manuscripts render both the German words "Kraft" and "Macht" as "power", but Marx employs the term "Kraft" (in different variations such as: Wesenkraft: essential power; Lebenkraft: vital power; etc.) only to denote human powers or faculties, whereas he reserves the term "Macht" to name what is a purely material-objective or reified force. An interesting confirmation of Marx's terminological precision can be found in the fact that he says: "menschliche wesenkraft", when alluding to human essential powers, and "unmenschliche Macht" when he wants to denote the opposite; i.e., unhuman, reified, or alien powers. See, for example, the manuscripts named "Need, production, and division of labour" (Bedürfnis, Produktion und Arbeitsteilung). Karl Marx, Texte zu Methode und Praxis Vol.II, pp.86-103.

2. Karl Marx, Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, K. Marx Early Writings, p.389. Notice that exactly the same terminology is employed by Marx in the Grundrisse. See for example p.750.

3. Marx, ibid., "Money", p.375.

4. Marx, ibid., p.353.

5. Marx, ibid., p.351.

6. This is explicit in the following passage of 1844 Manuscripts: "For not only the five senses, but also the so-called spiritual senses, the practical senses (will, love, etc.), in a word the human senses, the humanity of senses...." EPM, p.353.

7. Marx, ibid., p.389.

8. Marx, ibid., p.390.

9. Marx, ibid., p.329.

10. Marx and Engels, The German Ideology, p.457.

11. See, for example, the following passage of Grundrisse in which Marx gives an elaborated expression of this recognition: The barrier to capital is that this entire development pro-

ceeds in a contradictory way, and that the working-out of the productive forces, of general wealth etc., appears in such a way that the working individual alienates himself; relates to the conditions brought out of him by his labour as those not of his own but of an alien wealth and of his own poverty. But this antithetical form is itself fleeting, and produces the real conditions of its own suspension. The result is: the tendentially and potentially general development of the forces of production--wealth as such--as a basis; likewise, the universality of intercourse, hence world market as a basis. The basis as the possibility of the universal development of the individual, and the real development of the individuals from this basis as a constant suspension of its barrier, not taken for a sacred limit. Not an ideal or imagined universality of the individual, but the universality of his real and ideal relations.
Marx, Grundrisse, pp.451-52.

12. Marx, ibid., p.893.

13. Man does not create his last ontological determinations or the rules for realizing its potentialities. These are given. It is man's mode of existence, his way of realizing itself which is free. In other words, man attains his good by realizing his essence according to certain given laws. In this consists his heteronomy but at the same time his autonomy or freedom. For Marx's conception of freedom see: James J. O'Rourke, The Problem of Freedom in Marxist Thought, chapter II. Also, Meszaros, Marx's Theory of Alienation, chapters V and VI.

14. E. Kamenka, Marxism and Ethics, pp.19-27.

15. Marx and Engels, ibid., pp.491-92.

16. Marx, Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, p.384.

CONCLUSION

With the help of all the materials considered so far in this inquiry it is finally possible to arrive at some major conclusions. Marx has rejected the ontological interpretation of alienation in Hegel and in political economy. This rejection has been made on the basis that it is not the realization of labour's essence but its historical negation which has led man into bondage. Or what is the same, Marx has shown that the alienation of human activity is not the result of the contradictory essence of labour itself, but of the negation of that essence in its historical existence, i.e., in society based in private property.[1] This contradiction between the existence and essence of man's life activity amounts objectively to the historical contradiction between his productive capability and the material conditions of actualization of these capacities. This is a fact that must be historically explained, that is not natural, that cannot be simply assumed:

> It is not the unity of living and active humanity with the natural, inorganic conditions of their metabolic exchange with nature, and hence their appropriation of nature, which require explanation or is the result of a historic process, but rather the <u>separation</u> between these inorganic conditions of human existence and this active existence, a separation which is completely posited only in the relation of wage labour and capital.[2]

From this perspective we can grasp the true meaning of Marx's criticism of the capitalist mode of appropriation of labour expressed for example in the following passage of the <u>Manuscripts of 1844</u>:

> In relation to the worker who appropriates nature through his labour, appropriation <u>appears</u> (my emphasis) as estrangement, self activity as activity for another, and of another, vitality as a sacrifice of life, production of an object

> as loss of that object to an alien power, to an alien man.[3]

All these features of human activity specified by Marx--appropriation, self-activity, vitality, productivity, etc.--are in fact particularizations of the concept of power or force; and its opposed terms--estrangement, activity for another, sacrifice of life, loss of the object, etc.--nothing but its respective negations, negations of "the specific character and the power of human nature" (EPM, p.275). What has happened then in the commodity producing society is that the intentionality of human praxis has been reverted. The "natural" telos of human activity consisting in the potentiation of some power, the satisfaction of some necessity, the unfolding of some "power of action" (as Spinoza would say),[4] has been reverted into its contrary, transforming the worker's labour into "an activity directed against himself" (EPM, p.327). Or, as it is put by Marx in his later works: The general character of labour, consisting in the active assimilation of objects to human needs, has been denaturalized, reducing labour to a mere instrument or means in the process of capital's reproduction, thus putting human living-power to the service of a dead objectivity.[5] The power of domination of man over his objective world has been turned into the domination of the objective power of the world over man.

Only now are we in a position to nullify the basis of the aforementioned objections to Marx's theory of alienation (and indirectly to his doctrine of human nature) consisting in the accusation that that doctrine necessarily requires the establishment of an "ideal pattern" according to which the negation or realization of human essence can be historically determined. In fact Marx does not need to resort to that kind of ahistorical pattern, neither to criticize capitalist society, nor to conceive a future society without alienation. For one thing, he did not conceive the actual and the possible human nature as two separate entities. As Marcuse says:

> For Marx essence and facticity, the situation of essential history and the situation of factual history, are

> no longer separate regions or levels independent of each other; the historical experience of man is taken up into the definition of his essence. We are no longer dealing with an abstract human essence which remains equally valid at every stage of concrete history, but with an essence which can be defined in history and only in history.[6]

In other words, what man could become and what he is can be established in terms of the same ontological and historical determinations. Secondly, Marx does not need recourse to any ahistorical pattern because he sees in labour the key to and manifestation of human nature. Thirdly, for him every possibility of development of man depends on the conditions created by labour as its necessary and permanent condition, and thanks to the tremendous expansion of the productive forces of labour obtained through the use of science and technology man is materially capable of superseding alienation.

Given that man is ontologically an "ens laborans", i.e., an active being endowed with the capacity of transforming nature and his relations with it, and thus capable of transforming himself, the realization of human essence is equivalent to the potentiation of his vital powers. This is why the marxian project of transcendence of alienation does not have a utopian character. Marx is not postulating the historical realization of a certain "ideal of man", formulated ex-nihilo, but contrarily what he does is to show us the possibility of superseding the present situation of man on the basis of the present existing ontological and historical conditions. In this sense the marxian project of liberation does not establish other limits to the development of human nature than the ontological, i.e., those determined by the limited, active character of man and his mediate relationship with nature. These are the only permanent features of man for Marx. Neither does Marx judge the possible supersession of alienation from an un-historical or supra-historical pattern, because for him human history is nothing but the history of man's teleological activity[7] or as Marx says: "The whole of what is called world history is nothing more than the creation of man through human labour and the development of nature for man."[8] Marx

does not anticipate what the future development will be of man and his nature (even though he sees in the present the elements from which it is possible to foresee some of its more general traits); he simply declares that no matter how this process takes place it cannot occur except inside the limits established by the basic ontological conditions of man. At the same time Marx is saying that the all round realization of the vital human powers constitutes a true "must" for man, in so far as this development is in harmony with needs deeply rooted in man's nature. But this is an ethical process, and not simply a deterministic one, for man can actually fail to realize his true nature.[9]

FOOTNOTES FOR CONCLUSION

1. Concerning the connection between alienation and private property, Marx says in the 1844 Manuscripts: "...material, immediately sensuous private property is the material, sensuous expression of estranged human life" (EPM, pp.348-49). That is, for Marx private property (or which is for bourgeois political economy the same: egoism) is not a natural or essential condition of man, but the consequence of the alienation of man's productive activity. In this sense private property can only represent a perverted form of a genuine human relationship toward objectivity and toward other men. Thus, the end of private property is for Marx the end of the egoistic relationship of man toward those two kinds of realities, or as Marx puts it in the text just quoted:
   ...assuming the positive supersession of private property, man produces man, himself and other men;...the object, which is the direct activity of his individuality, is at the same time his existence for other men, their existence and their existence for him (EPM, p.349).

2. Marx, Grundrisse, Foundations of A Critique of Political Economy, p.489.

3. Marx, Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844, Karl Marx Early Writings, p.334.

4. Spinoza, Ethics, Part IV, preface, p.190. (Elwes translation.)

5. See Capital Vol.I, p.399. Also Grundrisse, p.461.

6. H. Marcuse, "The Foundation of Historical Materialism", Studies in Critical Philosophy, p.28.

7. In the sense of a finite teleology. See A. Schmidt, The Concept of Nature in Marx, chapter I.

8. Marx, ibid., p.357.

9. An obvious objection to this last conclusion is that I am contradicting here my main contentions, and relapsing into what I have criticized throughout the entire thesis. But this con-

tradiction is only apparent. I believe I have consistently refuted the claim that Marx's doctrine of alienation and his project of transcendence of it, require an ideal or utopian conception of man. But this rejection does not in any way imply that we have to accept that the process of "de-alienation" must be conceived as an historically inavoidable outcome of human development. It is perfectly consistent with the theory of human nature I have being defending in this thesis to say that man can fail in realizing his potentialities, potentialities which are rooted in certain ontological determinations, but that are not naturally but <u>socially</u> determined in their actualization.

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